

ADOPTED CHARTER FOR THE COMMUNITY PLANNING COLLABORATIVE ON HOMELESSNESS

Background: Community Process

The Fairfax-Falls Church Continuum of Care planning process for the homeless evolved from an effort to provide a coordinated response to homeless issues in Fairfax County. This formal community-wide collaboration was largely inspired by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD initiated the Continuum of Care process in 1994 to encourage a coordinated, strategic approach to planning for programs that assist individuals and families who are homeless. The Continuum of Care concept reorganized the process through which McKinney homeless assistance funds were awarded.

Fairfax County has benefited greatly from the HUD grant process. HUD has awarded millions of dollars to county programs to support homeless services and facilities. Many programs greatly depend on this funding stream to sustain current programming and meet the needs of the homeless. Consequently, the Continuum of Care has tended to develop more focus on the HUD application and improving those elements that feed this process and less emphasis on the broader goals that address the big picture aspects of homelessness.

Background: Leadership and Governance

During the 2002-2003 Continuum of Care (CoC) planning cycle, the CoC Community Planning Group formed a Strategic Thinking Committee which was tasked, in part, with looking at alternative structures for the Continuum of Care process and developing recommendations for consideration during the 2003-2004 planning cycle. These recommendations were to be reviewed by and coordinated with the Homeless Oversight Committee (HOC). The HOC was established by the Board of Supervisors in 1991 to oversee efforts to address homeless issues in Fairfax County. In addition to other duties, the HOC currently, and has historically, provided oversight to the CoC process, as well as providing critical information about homeless issues to the Board of Supervisors and advocating for affordable housing and programs to meet the needs of homeless persons.

In recent years, changes in overall community needs as well as HUD priorities and subsequent funding patterns have created a need to rethink the current Continuum of Care process and begin looking at a model that would address both short-term and long-term strategic planning goals. Some of these goals include program accountability, outreach and advocacy, resource development, and the coordination of qualitative and quantitative data for community planning. As the need for strategic leadership in the community process has evolved, the Homeless Oversight Committee has also become more closely linked to the programs and activities of the Continuum of Care.

A New Process:

To reflect the intended change in focus and recognize the convergence in the work of the Homeless Oversight Committee and the Continuum of Care, ***this Charter replaces the Homeless Oversight Committee and the Continuum of Care process with a new process*** to be called the **Community Planning Collaborative on Homelessness**.

Broad Purposes:

The broad purposes of the Community Planning Collaborative on Homelessness encompass and integrate the purposes of both the Continuum of Care and the Homeless Oversight Committee. The collaborative will work to ensure that everyone who lives in the Fairfax community can have appropriate housing that is affordable, accessible, stable, decent and safe, and that the County and the community support policies, programs and services that prevent homelessness and meet the needs of those families and individuals who become homeless. It will pursue this purpose by working to improve communication and mutual support among providers, advocates, faith groups, businesses, and the community at large, including the Board of Supervisors.

Community Council on Homelessness

New Process:

In the new process, the Community Council on Homelessness will merge the leadership and planning responsibilities of the CoC's Strategic Thinking Committee with the oversight responsibilities of the Homeless Oversight Committee. *Once the new structure is in place, the Strategic Thinking Committee and the Homeless Oversight Committee will cease to operate as separate entities.* All of the functions and responsibilities of these committees will be incorporated under the new Community Council on Homelessness, which will provide governance and leadership of the community process for addressing homeless needs and issues. The former community process, or CoC Community Planning Group, will be reconstituted as the Community Forum on Homelessness, which will involve all parties in the community who have an interest in or provide services related to addressing homelessness.

Primary Functions:

- Provide overall leadership, oversight, and governance to the community planning process.
- Work with input from the Community Forum on Homelessness to develop annual goals and objectives as part of the planning process.
- Establish and maintain relationships with the working committees to ensure coordination and communication with and among these committees on the work they are doing.
- Develop partnerships and strategize ways to address resource issues and to overcome short and long-term economic constraints for homeless programming.
- Address challenges within the planning process that include maintaining a competitive process, promoting best practices, developing training, monitoring performance, resolving problems, and establishing a grant project prioritization process that best reflects the needs of the community.
- Review the Human Services Performance Budget and the County Advertised Budget to provide comments and advice to the Human Services Council and the Board of Supervisors on issues affecting prevention services and homeless persons.
- Maintain linkage and representation on the Consolidated Community Funding Advisory Committee, and monitor utilization of CCFP funds for prevention and homeless services, and for development and preservation of affordable housing.
- Provide an Annual Report to the Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax-Falls Church community on the state of homelessness and priority needs and issues affecting homeless persons, including availability of and access to affordable housing.

Sponsors

The Community Planning Collaborative on Homelessness and the Community Council on Homelessness will be chartered by action of the Board of Supervisors, with appointments to the Council made by the County Executive.

Membership

The Community Council on Homelessness will include 7 to 9 appointed members plus the Chairs of the working committees that are formed to carry out the work of the Collaborative.

Community Forum on Homelessness

Background: Participation and Involvement

One of the strengths of the Continuum of Care process has been the ongoing Community Planning Group, consisting of all participants in the planning process, engaged in a consensus-driven process of continuing communication, dialogue, and collaboration. The community group has provided a sounding board for the exchange of ideas and information about programs, as well as the identification of new and emerging needs among the homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church community. It has been a forum in which new information and ideas can be introduced and discussed, and has provided an opportunity for people and organizations that are new to the process to learn about the existing system and how to become part of it. The success of any plan to address homelessness rests with having the participation and involvement of all of the organizations that can contribute to this effort.

New Process:

In the new process, the participation of all parties involved in homeless services, programs, and advocacy is continued in the Community Forum on Homelessness. The community group is the constituency for homeless services in the community at-large. It would meet at least three to four times per year to ensure broad exchange of information and interaction among participants.

Roles:

- Share information about what is happening in the working committees (see below) and provide feedback to the committees.
- Share information about other events or trends in the community.
- Provide a forum to identify issues and “bubble up” new ideas.
- Provide networking opportunities for participants
- Provide opportunities for people to become involved in work groups on particular issues.
- Be a forum to articulate and collaborate around a shared vision.

Membership:

Membership in the Community Forum on Homelessness is open to all organizations and persons who are involved or have an interest in services and programs to prevent homelessness or to address the needs of persons who become homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church community.

**Proposed Committees Of The
COMMUNITY PLANNING COLLABORATIVE ON HOMELESSNESS
Operating Under the Community Council on Homelessness
With participation from all parties in the Collaborative**

Education and Advocacy Committee

Purpose:

Keeping the community abreast of the challenges for our homeless neighbors and the services they need is necessary to sustain a continuous level of awareness and attention on the issue. Through the work of efficient service providers, the homeless population in Fairfax County is not often visible. The homeless issues could quickly become minimized if the message is not carried forward and clearly conveyed to community leaders. Similar to many other issues, addressing homelessness effectively will require the support of the entire community. Capturing their attention, increasing their understanding, and providing opportunities for involvement are essential elements in gaining community buy-in and support.

Primary Functions:

- Identify and recruit stakeholders to assist in communicating the message.
- Identify and/ or present information to prominent community groups and decision makers.
- Develop marketing materials that effectively and efficiently convey important points.
- Network to inspire community involvement and ongoing leadership.
- Involve homeless and formerly homeless persons in the planning process.
- Establish and promote collaboration with the Faith Community and reach out to the multi-ethnic community.

Resource Development Committee

Purpose:

Seeking and securing funding through a broader range of sources is an invaluable strategic initiative. Existing funding streams are not guaranteed and in many cases are already dwindling. It is vital to develop economic plans that will provide a stronger foundation for the continuation of Fairfax County homeless programs and services.

Primary Functions:

- Research other funding streams and identify potential organizations and key decision makers to develop relationships and collaboration with new partners.
- Seize opportunities to acquire tangible and intangible assets.
- Identify and seek opportunities for new or alternative grant funding.
- Continue to improve the grant application process, including the annual Housing and Urban Development application, to acquire the highest possible award amount. This includes active participation in collecting and supplying pertinent data, reviewing portions of the application for analysis and perspective.

Monitoring and Evaluation Committee

Purpose:

The Community Council on Homelessness will continue to discuss and address the need for better coordination in various areas; one of those areas is program monitoring and evaluation. Program accountability continues to be a critical element in demonstrating success. A coordinated monitoring and evaluation effort (1) ensures that programs are performing satisfactorily, (2) helps produce data to validate the efficiency and effectiveness of homeless programs in Fairfax County, and (3) raises the level of credibility for local programs to more readily compete for scarce resources.

Primary Functions:

- Research, adopt, and implement best practices criteria for homeless prevention.
- Identify and promote opportunities for training to enhance the quality and effectiveness of services provided to homeless persons.
- Develop a review process for programs that offers the ability to share knowledge and expertise across the system and enhances program efficiency and effectiveness. This system will provide routine evaluations of programs based on criteria agreed upon by the full planning collaborative. The basis for these evaluations will not solely be for HUD funding purposes, but for overall development and improvement of the homeless prevention and intervention programs within Fairfax County.
- Develop a process to assess and address formal complaints concerning the community planning (Continuum of Care) process and policies or violations thereof.
- Coordinate and collaborate with the Shelter Directors and other operational leadership groups to improve coordination among programs and movement of persons through the continuum to permanent stable housing.

Community Planning Committee

Purpose:

One way to effectively address both short and long term goals is to capture data from a variety of resources to help forecast and guide decision making. Some of these resources include the Point-In-Time (PIT) Survey, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), needs assessments, the Consolidated Community Funding Pool (CCFP) and the County Budget. These resources supply data to help draw a picture of the current environment by identifying gaps, service needs, funding patterns and community priorities. In addition, by reviewing these resources over time, trends data is revealed to further support planning efforts. The participants in the Community Forum on Homelessness and the Community Council on Homelessness should be aware of these elements as they seek to sustain the current range and level of homeless services and develop new initiatives to address homeless issues.

Primary Functions:

- Analyze data and forward information to other committees to enhance communication and planning around homeless issues.
- Remain aware of environmental factors, trends and updates in data.
- Capture and forward pertinent data in a timely data.
- Identify gaps in data that would provide valuable insight for the community process.

Program Development Committee

Purpose:

Identify opportunities to develop programs that will provide housing and related services to individuals and families who are homeless. Maintain a big picture perspective across the County as to the variety of projects and programs that could be initiated and/or provided in coordination with other ongoing programs and services for homeless persons and families. Work with the other subcommittees and the Community Council to match identified gaps in service with resources and to stay abreast of the action plans and implementation of these initiatives.

Primary Functions:

- Identify and encourage the development of new initiatives and pilot projects in the community through provision of technical assistance, cross-county and cross-functional communication.
- Act as a central coordination point or conduit for various housing program initiatives that are evolving throughout the community (e.g. ideally through direct participation).
- Provide feedback and information to the various individual program and project initiatives to transfer knowledge across the system and improve the delivery of services through more educated decision making.

Committee Structure for All Committees

A committee Chair will be elected by the members of the committee. Election of the Chair should be done annually. The committee chairs will communicate the work of the committees to the Community Council, and will also share information with Chairs of other committees as needed in order to further the collective work of the Collaborative. To this end, special *ad hoc* work groups may be formed for projects that need to tap into the knowledge or expertise of more than one committee. The Committee Chairs will have a key role in ensuring that effective communication takes place among the working committees as well as to and from the Community Council on Homelessness.

Other committee roles and responsibilities will be developed after the committee is organized by committee members in conjunction with Community Council on Homelessness.